

REMARKS

Status of Application

Claims 1-20 are the claims that have been examined in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 19, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable by Rikima (U.S. Patent No. 5,918,088) in view of Sugiura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,047,111). Claims 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, and 16-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rikima in view of Sugiura and further in view of Miura (U.S. Patent No. 5,844,694). Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rikima in view of Sugiura and further in view of Hayasaki (U.S. Patent No. 2005/0225790).

By this Amendment, Applicant is amending claims 1, 3-6 and 10, and is canceling claim 2.

Preliminary Matters

Applicant thanks the Examiner for withdrawing the specification objection and the objections to claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Additionally, Applicant thanks the Examiner for withdrawing all of the prior art rejections listed in the Office Action dated December 28, 2005.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

A. *Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 19, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable by Rikima (U.S. Patent No. 5,918,088) in view of Sugiura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,047,111).*

Amended claim 1 recites, in part, “an image printing instructing component which instructs the image printing component to print an image ... in the order that the receiving component completed the storage of the plurality of image information when the image information has been received simultaneously from the image supplying devices.” The Examiner alleges that Rikima discloses this aspect of the claimed invention, citing col. 1, lines 14-38. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The cited section of Rikima discloses that a job file must be examined page by page to determine the proper printing sequence. Rikima fails to teach that a plurality of image information is received simultaneously from the image supplying devices, as it teaches only one job file. Further, Rikima fails to teach that the order of printing is based on the order that the receiving component *completes the storage* of the plurality of image information. Sugiura does not cure this deficiency, as Sugiura discloses printing image information in the order in which it is received, not in which the storage is completed.

Further, in the present Office Action, the Examiner does not cite any portion of Rikima or Sugiura in which there is a teaching or suggestion that the references may be combined as alleged by the Examiner. The fact that each individual reference discloses transfer data and imaging apparatuses is irrelevant without objective evidence found within the references themselves. Additionally, the Examiner does not provided objective support for the cited motivation, “to accept a plurality of print jobs without bottleneck errors and thus increase processing efficiency.” See page 7 of the Office Action. Therefore, because the Examiner has does not provided any objective evidence that the references may be combined, the Examiner has not met the burden required in establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Additionally, the combination would still appear to lack features of the independent claims. In particular Rikima seeks to end delays in print processing by accumulating jobs and grouping them according to common printing characteristics. See Rikima, col. 13. This dependency among print jobs provides the benefits of the Rikima reference. Sugaira is cited for the purposes of simultaneous receipt of print jobs from multiple sources, such that a backlog of one device (device B) does not adversely affect all others (devices A, C). However, in the context of jobs received from a device A or C, for example, the combined teachings of Rikima and Sugaira would still create dependencies in all jobs of A, C to be consistent with the teachings of Rikima. In other words, if Rikima were modified to describe to eradicate the dependencies (grouping of commonalities) among print jobs A, C, this would undermine all of the objects of the primary reference, and create a different bottleneck that Rikima seeks to cure. Such modifications are improper.

Therefore, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine the references, and even if combined, the combined teachings do not satisfy all elements of the claims.

For the above reasons, amended claim 1 is patentable over the applied references.

Claims 5 and 6 should be patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from amended claim 1.

Independent claim 8 recites, in part, “a selecting component which selects the image information which has been stored by the receiving component.” The Examiner argues that it is inherent to the system to have a unit which selects the stored image information. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Rikima does not teach storing image information simultaneously and

independently when receiving simultaneously the image information from the plurality of image supplying devices. Because Rikima does not receive image information from the plurality of image supplying devices, it does not need to select the image information which as been stored. Sugiura fails to cure this defect in Rikima. Sugiura prints image information in the order in which it is received and stored, not in the order in which it is *completely* received. See new claim 21. Therefore, claim 8 is patentable over the applied art. Claims 11 and 12 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 8.

Independent claim 15 and dependent claim 20 recite similar limitations as is found in amended claim 1. Therefore, for reasons analogous to those presented with regard to amended claim 1, claims 15 and 20 are patentable over the applied art.

Independent claim 19 recites, in part, “adding additional information to related image information when the received image information relates to each other; giving instructions to print an image by using consecutively the related image information to which the additional information has been added.” The Examiner alleges that Rikima teaches this aspect of the claim, citing col. 12, lines 30-59. Applicant respectfully disagrees. This portion of Rikima recites that the system CPU verifies the image information, not adds additional information if related image data is sent to the device. The additional information identifies that the received image information in fact relates to each other and requires that the related image data is printed consecutively. Further, Sugiura fails to cure the defect noted in Rikima. Sugiura relates to multiple host devices sending information to a printing device, but fails to state that related documents are printed consecutively based on the additional information. Claim 19 is patentable over the applied art.

Claim 20 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 19.

B. Claims 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rikima in view of Sugiura and further in view of Miura (U.S. Patent No. 5,844,694).

Claims 3, 4, and 16-18 are dependent from amended claim 1 and claim 15, respectively. Because Rikima and Sugiura fail to teach all of the aspects of amended claim 1 and claim 15, and because Miura fails to cure the defects noted with respect to Rikima and Sugiura, claims 3, 4 and 16-18 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Claims 7, 9, 10 and 13 are dependent from amended claim 1 and claim 8, respectively. Because Rikima and Sugiura fail to teach all of the aspects of amended claim 1 and claim 8, and because Miura fails to cure the defects noted with respect to Rikima and Sugiura, claims 7, 9, 10 and 13 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

C. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rikima in view of Sugiura and further in view of Hayasaki (U.S. Patent No. 2005/0225790).

Claim 14 is dependent from claim 8. Because Rikima and Sugiura fail to teach all of the aspects of amended claim 1 and claim 8, and because Hayasaki fails to cure the defects noted with respect to Rikima and Sugiura, claim 14 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

New Claims

New claims 21 and 22 are dependent from claims 8 and 1, respectively. Therefore, claims 21 and 22 are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: August 31, 2006